

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested in light of the above amendments and following remarks. It is respectfully requested that the above amendments be entered as they place the application in condition for allowance or in better condition for appeal.

Claims 1-10 and 16-18 are in the application. Claims 16-18 stand allowed, claims 1-6, 8 and 9 stand rejected, and claims 7 and 10 stand objected to. The present amendment seeks to delete claims 1-10 and to add new independent claim 21 that corresponds with dependent claim 7.

Claims 1-6, 8, and 9 have been deleted, so the rejection of claims 1-6, 8 and 9 is moot. It is understood that these claims are being deleted solely for the purpose of expediting prosecution of the present application and issuance of a patent. The deletion of these claims should not be deemed as an admission that the rejection is proper and is without prejudice or waiver. Applicant reserves the right to reassert these and other claims in related, later filed applications.

Paragraph 7 of the final Office action indicates that claim 7 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but that claim 7 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, dependent claim 7 has been deleted and rewritten in independent form as new claim 21 which includes all of the limitations of the base claim and all intervening claims. It is therefore submitted that new claim 21 distinguishes over and is patentable over the references of record. It is understood that claim 7 is being deleted and rewritten in independent form as claim 21 solely for the purpose of expediting prosecution of the present application and issuance of a patent. This should not be deemed as an admission that the rejection is proper and is without prejudice or waiver. Applicant reserves the right to reassert these and other claims in related, later filed applications.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that claims 16-18 and 21 distinguish over and are patentable over the references of record. Formal notice thereof is respectfully requested. If the Examiner deems that anything else is required to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the numbers given below.

Date: 6-4-04

Respectfully submitted,


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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on the following date: 6-4-04


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